



Veterans' Affairs Committee
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Veterans' Affairs Committee

MINUTES

The regular meeting of the Veterans' Affairs Committee was called to order by J.L. Pepe Mendoza, Junior Vice Chairperson, on Wednesday, December 9, 2009, at 7:09 p.m., in the Mayor and Council Chambers, City Hall, 255 W. Alameda St., Tucson, Arizona.

1. Call to Order/Establish a Quorum

Members Present:

Ernest Minchella
Teri Davis
Cathi Starr
William Stein
Roger Smith
Ferdinando Leon Jr
Vern Pall
J.L. "Pepe" Mendoza
Herbert Rogers
Saul Stoltz
E. Wendell Hague
Paul R. Hetrick
Daniel Ross
Arrived at 7:14
Norman Ross
C. Martin Stevens, Chairperson

Members Absent:

Abel Moreno

Others Present:

Paul G. Marsh
Daniel Morelos
Dee Brunner
Jeff Brunner
Anne Skelley

Representing:

American Legion Post #36
Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America
AZ. Dept. of Veterans' Services
DAV Auxiliary Cactus #2
DAV Cactus Chapter #2
Marine Corps League, Marana Night Hawk 72
Military Officers Association of America
So. AZ. VA Health Care System
Spanish Trail Chapter NCOA
Tucson Jewish War Veterans Post 201
VFW Post #549
Vietnam Veterans of America, Ch. 106
Vietnam Veterans of America, Ch. 106

Korean War Veterans' Association
Veteran's Employment & Training

Representing:

American Legion Post #7

Tucson Veterans Cemetery Group
Tucson Airport Authority
Tucson Airport Authority
Retired
Guest

2. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Wendell Hague.

3. Invocation

The invocation was given by Saul Stoltz.

4. Introduction of Guests

Guests Paul Marsh of the Tucson Veterans Cemetery Group, Daniel Morelos and Dee Brunner of the Tucson Airport Authority, Dee's husband Jeff Brunner and Anne Skelley were introduced to the Committee.

5. Approval of New Members

There were no new members to approve.

6. Chairman's Report on Current Events: For the Good of the Order

Chair Stevens "Thanked All VAC Members" for their support during his tenure as VAC Chair and announced this was his last meeting as his membership time had expired. He said he would always be available to help any VAC member who knew of a Veteran in need of employment; He would provide name, address and phone number of a Veterans Representative to help the Veteran with employment help and/or support as needed. No formal report was given. See 10e.

7. Approval of Minutes – November 4, 2009

Junior Vice Chair Mendoza offered a correction to Item 12. He requested the wording, "The ceremony was generally held in February but had in the past been combined with the Memorial Day ceremonies", be replaced with the wording "Last year's ceremony was held on February 8 at the R. E. Lindsay Auditorium located at the Southern Arizona Veterans' Administration Health Care System facility and it should continue to be held in February."

It was moved, duly seconded and passed by a voice vote of 13 to 0 (Abel Moreno, C. Martin Stevens, and Norman Ross absent/excused) to approve the minutes of November 4, 2009 as corrected.

8. Discussion / Action Regarding Operation Exodus 2009

Senior Vice Chair Norman Ross (arrived at 7:14 p.m.) suggested a small card from the committee to the troops be included in the "goody bags." Ferdinando Leon, Jr. volunteered to help with the printing of about one thousand six hundred simple cards. The committee had been contacted by Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords District 8 Office asking if they could bring cards made by children for the troops to be given out with the goody bags. Congresswoman Giffords also asked if she could stop by on Friday morning December 18 to show her appreciation to the soldiers passing through the Tucson International Airport. Mr. Ross said committee members would be meeting at 11:00 on December 14 at the Costco on Grant Road to shop for items for the goody bags. They would then take the purchases to the Santa Rita Room on the third level of the airport where they would be secured until the bagging could take place on Wednesday, December 16 at 9:00 a.m. The Airport Authority would be providing oranges and bananas on Friday, December 18. Mr. Ross said he had been in contact with Major Martinez and Lieutenant Whitehead at Fort Huachuca who had asked if the committee would be able to provide items for returning soldiers on the 2nd and 3rd of January 2010. Mr. Ross said he told them the committee had neither the financial or human resources to do that. He said the soldiers left Fort Huachuca in busloads and arrived in mass at the airport to await their flights home but when the soldiers returned, they came back individually not in mass which would make scheduling difficult. Dee Brunner of the Tucson Airport Authority said they would have returning soldiers wait curbside near baggage carousel one where forty to sixty troops would be picked up at a time by the Fort Huachuca busses.

9. Discussion / Action Regarding the Four Chaplains Ceremony

Pepe Mendoza announced, if the committee would like to have the band perform, Chaplain Zinck needed to confirm a date for the Four Chaplains Ceremony to schedule the 36th Army Band from Fort Huachuca. Because the Superbowl had been scheduled for February 7th, and Valentines Day was February 14th, it was moved, duly seconded and passed by a vote of 15 to 0 (Abel Moreno absent/excused) to hold the ceremony on Sunday, February 21, 2010. Norman Ross said he thought the ceremony should be held at the Veterans' Memorial on Ajo Way. The committee discussed the pros and cons of holding the ceremony outdoors in February, and the fact that many of those who attended would be from the Veterans' Administration Hospital. It was moved, duly seconded and passed by a vote of 14 to 1 (Abel Moreno absent/excused and Norman Ross dissenting) to hold the ceremony at the VA Medical Center in the Auditorium in Building Four (pending approval of the SAVAHCS Director). Saul Stoltz suggested the committee investigate having a commemorative plaque made and placed at the Veterans Memorial for the four chaplains. Norman Ross suggested it be a bronze relief of the picture of the four chaplains with some appropriate wording. The committee decided to add the item to a future agenda.

10. Committee Reports – Discussion/Action

a. Airport Military Lounge

Dee Brunner of the Tucson Airport Authority reported that the Airport Ambassador Program was one year old. The Ambassadors who were all volunteers were present at the Airport to tell arriving travelers all about Tucson, and to help them find their way about the airport. In the absence of a Military Liaison, they also stopped by the Military Lounge which was open daily from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. (and as needed after that). Ms. Brunner distributed applications to committee members to take back to their organizations to help recruit volunteers for the Military Lounge and/or the Ambassador Program. Volunteers would be eligible for parking validation, discounts at airport gift shops and snack bars and an ambassador vest and nametag. She also mentioned that there was an orientation class taking place on Thursday morning December 10 at 10:00 a.m. if any one was interested in attending. Ms. Brunner said she would be happy to be the contact point for questions and scheduling.

b. Arizona Department of Veterans' Services

Cathi Starr reported a new director for southern Arizona Homeless Veterans Services had been appointed. His name was Brad Bridwell out of the Phoenix office. She also announced that the 2010 Women's Conference was being scheduled for May 21 or 22, 2010 in Phoenix. Last year one hundred ninety two female veterans attended the conference.

c. V A Hospital

Pepe Mendoza distributed News Releases regarding the success of the VA Home Loan Program, and the announced study of Vietnam-Era Women Veterans in order to provide better health care. He also presented the committee with copies of Health Trends containing information on seasonal and H1N1 Flu. Mr. Mendoza announced a research project taking place at the Southern Arizona VA Healthcare Hospital for Heart Patches that would mend and strengthen the heart and an upcoming program featuring Tucson regarding Pharmacist Recruiting for the Veterans Administration. He also mentioned an upcoming interview on the Spanish Language KUVU Channels 38/49 Univision with Dr. Michael Marks regarding a program in cooperation with the University of Arizona for returning veterans of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom concerning their transition back to the college and the challenges they met with possible

Traumatic Brain Injuries and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and helping those veterans seek help.

d. Arizona DES Employment Administration Veterans' Employment Services

Chair Stevens reported the Department of Economic Security Veterans Employment Services was doing a better job putting people to work than other job services this time of year. The Department helped Veterans overcome barriers to employment by providing services from resume writing to training programs. Veterans also received priority service and follow up.

e. Financial Report

Wendell Hague presented the committee's financial report through November 30, 2009. It was moved, duly seconded, and passed by a voice vote of 15 to 0 (Abel Moreno, absent/excused) to accept the report as presented.

11. Future Agenda Items

- Discussion / Action Regarding a Commemorative Plaque for the Four Chaplains

12. Annual Nomination and Election of Committee Officers

Nominations of Officers for the year 2010 were accepted. They were: Norman Ross for Chairperson; Vern Pall for Senior Vice Chairperson; Teri Davis for Junior Vice Chairperson; Wendell Hague for Treasurer with Norman Ross as the alternate signer on the committee account. It was moved, duly seconded, and carried by a voice vote of 15 to 0 (Abel Moreno, absent/excused) to elect those nominated.

13. Salute to Colors

The Salute to Colors was led by C. M. Stevens.

14. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:28 p.m.